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The Daily Summary

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ARGENTINA: Military leaders seem pleased that President Peron's government has finally acceded to their wish for greater participation in the campaign against Argentine guerrillas. (page 4)

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Argentine Military Increases Anti-Insurgency Role

Increased military involvement against Argentine guerrillas is providing some political benefits for President Maria Estela Peron.

Military leaders seem pleased that the administration finally acceded to their long-standing wish for greater participation in the counter-insurgency effort. The armed forces are acting on the basis of last month's presidential decrees establishing national defense and internal security councils. Heightened counter insurgency may divert those officers who might otherwise be plotting against the President.

In recent weeks, the police and military have carried out large-scale operations in Tucuman Province, long a terrorist stronghold. They have also carried out numerous searches in urban and rural areas elsewhere, and road and highway check points have been set up all over the country. Hundreds NR suspected subversives reportedly have been arrested and some killed in sweeps that, for the first time, have been supported by helicopters and other aircraft.

For the moment, the increased military role in the counterinsurgency effort seems to be alleviating military pressure on Peron. In the longer term, however, it could pave the way for greater military control of national affairs.

Already, the military is reportedly pressing to have its greater powers formalized. It is backing new legislation that would not only recognize armed forces authority in the anti-guerrilla struggle but would expand the definition of subversion to include financial wrongdoing and corruption in office. This could prove particularly worrisome to an administration that only last week moved to quash an investigation into wrongdoing at the highest levels of government.

Senate president Luder is said to have told his colleagues that failure to oblige the officers on this bill could well lead to a military coup. 3.5(c)

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